

CHAPTER FIVE

Administrator Evaluation

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Though research has demonstrated that quality principal leadership can significantly impact student achievement, the role of the principal is complex. Effective principals must use data to develop a vision for teaching and learning, foster a productive culture focused on high expectations, and manage and support their staff to achieve these outcomes.¹ Unfortunately, most principal evaluation systems lack frameworks tied to existing literature on effective school leadership.² Additionally, evaluation rubrics typically employ a binary approach—principals either have the skill or they don't. As a result, most principals receive positive evaluations, and few find that evaluations provide detailed information about how to improve their practice.³

Some school districts have begun to use more comprehensive mechanisms for evaluating administrators, such as the Administrator Portfolio Evaluation Process (APEP).⁴ APEP modifies the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) leadership standards, which are based on empirical research about what works, and applies the concepts of a performance-based rubric discussed in the previous chapter. Administrators are evaluated by assessing how effectively they promote high standards for all students, use student-learning data to make decisions, and create an environment for their staff that focuses on student achievement and continuous professional development. While APEP can be used as a portion of the annual evaluation of school administrators, it also catalyzes school leaders' professional growth through self-assessment and reflection.

The APEP system, developed under the direction of John Deasy when he was superintendent of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District in California, provides evaluation and self-reflection tools that support administrator growth, school improvement, and student achievement. Below, Deasy expounds upon these evaluation mechanisms and how they can be utilized to assess administrator quality and enhance school improvement efforts.

INTRODUCTION

Research on effective schools supports the conclusion that administrators critically impact teacher behavior and student learning.⁵ While limited evidence exists of the direct effects of leadership on student learning, ample evidence demonstrates that school leaders exert considerable influence over developing and maintaining a school community committed to a shared vision that promotes student achievement.⁶

Accordingly, school-based administrative evaluation should reveal and reflect the quality of the individual administrator's leadership, as well as the impact of that leadership on school quality and student achievement. A comprehensive evaluation should include the following components:

- A reflective self-assessment.⁷ The reflective component provides insight into administrators' thinking and allows them to assess the efficacy of their actions and the potential impact on results. Structured reflection on one's own practice during the evaluation process promotes personal and professional growth.⁸
- A standards-based, performance-driven formal external summative evaluation, which measures administrators' actions (or inputs).
- An assessment of student learning results, which evaluates one dimension of administrators' results (or outputs).

Districts should develop a comprehensive plan to nurture instructional leadership and support newly appointed administrators. The Administrator's Portfolio and Evaluation Process described here was developed for use in Santa Monica-Malibu (California) Unified School District.⁹ The APEP provides a common tool and process that promotes administrator growth, school improvement, and student achievement. Initial implementation of the portfolio and the peer/evaluator support process convincingly demonstrated to administrators and central office staff that this type of reflection added important professional learning to the evaluation process.

This chapter will offer several key considerations for districts interested in implementing a new administrator evaluation system or modifying their own system:

- *Defining good performance.* This definition should set clear expectations for high-quality school leader performance.
- *Aligning with strategic plans.* Districts want to ensure that performance standards align with systemic and school strategic plans.
- *Developing procedures and instruments for use in the evaluation system.* These decisions include all operational details of the system, such as number of ob-

servations, whether observations are announced or unannounced, conferences, choice of artifacts, instruments, personnel, timeline, etc.

- *Designing professional development and creating peer learning communities.* These processes must ensure that school leaders understand the elements of professional practice and take ownership over their development.

The benefits of a well-designed administrator evaluation system extend beyond the imperative for monitoring administrator performance. If the tools and procedures are developed with the aim of promoting administrator growth, such a system can support continuous self-assessment, reflection on practice, and improved performance.

DEFINING GOOD PERFORMANCE

An administrator portfolio and evaluation system, which defines good performance, should include three components: (1) clear standards, (2) statements of knowledge/dispositions/behaviors, and (3) rubrics.

Clear Standards

Districts will need to begin by setting standards for high-quality administrator performance.¹⁰ As with teacher evaluation, an administrator-evaluation system must rest on an agreed-upon definition of what constitutes good administrator leadership. This definition should be explicated through clear, concise standards that are both research and performance based, reflect a professional view of leadership, and delineate between levels of performance.

Districts will need to decide whether to adopt a new framework or alter a set of standards to reflect local circumstances and priorities. APEP was created by modifying the six standards for school leaders developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium to meet the distinct needs of our system (shown below). The first four standards used are identical to the ISLLC standards, while the final two standards were customized to respond to our district's need for school leaders who foster multicultural awareness and communicate effectively. Districts will need to define their own vision of high-quality school leadership:

- *Standard 1: Instructional Leadership.* A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
- *Standard 2: Assessment and Supervision.* A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing,

and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

- *Standard 3: Management and Organizational Skills.* A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
- *Standard 4: Community-Parent Partnerships.* A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- *Standard 5: Multicultural Awareness and Appreciation.* A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by insisting on respect for all members of the school community, acceptance of different points of view, a socially just community, fairness, and equity.
- *Standard 6: Effective Communication.* A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by clearly communicating, understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Once they have identified the leadership standards, districts must also describe what constitutes effective performance by creating (1) a set of statements regarding administrator knowledge, dispositions, and behaviors, and (2) rubrics that include varied levels of performance for key components of each standard.

Knowledge, Dispositions, and Behaviors

Knowledge, dispositions, and behaviors define clear performance expectations and ensure that both administrators and their evaluators share a common vision for what high-quality leadership looks like in practice. Figure 5.1 provides an example of the knowledge, dispositions, and behaviors for Standard 6: Effective Communication. Those statements with an asterisk (*) are from the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders document, while the remaining statements were customized by members of the school district community.

Rubrics

In addition to these statements, districts must construct rubrics for each standard by identifying key components and providing a set of observable behaviors for each strand. These rubrics must create levels of performance that represent the various levels of mastery of each component of a standard.

FIGURE 5.1

Excerpts of knowledge, dispositions, and behaviors associated with Standard 6: Effective communication

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of

- the law as it relates to education and schooling*
- the political, social, cultural, and economic systems and processes that impact schools*
- models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural, and economic contexts of schooling*
- effective communication with different audiences, verbally and non-verbally
- gender differences in communication styles
- conflict resolution training for self and staff

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to

- education as a key to opportunity and social mobility*
- the importance of a continuing dialogue with other decision makers affecting education*
- maintaining poise and composure in stressful situations
- listening to parent and community concerns
- communicating with non-English-speaking students and parents
- remaining visible, available, and approachable to students, staff, and parents in the halls, gym, cafeteria, and other places throughout the day

Behaviors (referred to as "Performances" in the ISLLC document)

The administrator demonstrates effective communication by

- working with the governing board and district and local leaders to influence policies that benefit students and support the improvement of teaching and learning
- influencing and supporting public policies, which ensure the equitable distribution of resources and support for all subgroups of students
- ensuring that the school operates consistently within the parameters of federal, state and local laws, policies, regulations, and statutory requirements
- generating support for the school by two-way communication with key decision makers in the school community
- viewing oneself as a leader of a team and also as a member of a larger team
- opening the school to the public and welcoming and facilitating constructive conversations about how to improve student learning and achievement

Those statements with an asterisk (*) are from the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders document

Table 5.1 is a sample rubric for one of the key elements in Standard 6: Effective Communication. The entire rubric possesses the following essential qualities:

- *Key Elements.* Communication skills, interpersonal skills, communication with staff, student and parent communication, and communication/interaction with district
- *Distinct Levels of Performance.* Did not meet standard, met standard, or exceeded standard
- *Observable Behaviors.* Clearly defined for each element at each level of performance

The rubrics provide information about performance at a variety of levels and allow administrators to recognize gaps or strengths within a specific component.

TABLE 5.1
Rubric for Standard 6: Effective communication

Communication skill	Does not meet standards	Meets standards	Exceeds standards
	Is ineffective in communication and problem-solving with different audiences and insensitive to gender and cultural differences in communication styles.	Demonstrates effective communication and problem-solving skills with different audiences. Recognizes and demonstrates sensitivity to gender and cultural differences in communication styles.	Routinely demonstrates effective communication and problem-solving skills, demonstrates sensitivity to gender and cultural differences in communications styles, and recognizes communication barriers and devises strategies to overcome them.
	Does not maintain composure in stressful situations and acts or speaks tactlessly.	Maintains poise, composure, and tact in stressful situations.	Wins admiration for tact and for remaining gracious in stressful situations.
	Communicates in an insincere and/or disrespectful manner.	Is respectful and sincere in communications.	Is consistently respectful and sincere in communications.
Communication skill	Oral and written communications are uneven, with frequent grammar and spelling errors.	Communicates using correct grammar and spelling.	Consistently demonstrates effective use of language in oral and written communications.

The standard of communication is broken down into discrete skills, which allow for a detailed examination of practice.

These rubrics are reviewed and used by administrators as part of their assessment, by fellow site administrators as part of the collaborative feedback reflection sessions, and by the designated evaluator as part of the formal evaluation process.

Weighting, Score Combining, and Standard-Setting

Districts must decide how to weight and score certain components of practice to determine whether or not an administrator has met or exceeded standards. First, a district will need to determine whether some or all of the standards will be addressed in the portfolio each year. Next, they need to discuss whether some of the standards should be weighted more heavily than others. Finally, districts must clearly communicate the rationale for these decisions, as well as how the system will work, to all administrators participating in the process.

Districts will need to determine what constitutes acceptable and distinguished performance on the portfolio, which can be a challenging process. For example, should an administrator be allowed to receive a satisfactory assessment of the portfolio if one entry is judged “does not meet standard”? What about if two are judged unacceptable? On the other end of the performance spectrum, districts must determine what constitutes highly effective performance. Setting high standards or expectations for performance gives administrators targets to aim for, but should not be set so high that obtaining an above-expectations rating is impossible.

To address these issues, districts need to have thoughtful conversations about what combinations of performance across a range of portfolio entries will yield overall ratings of minimally satisfactory, satisfactory, or above expectations. Individual districts will undoubtedly approach the task of setting performance expectations differently, but we suggest convening an administrators union and management joint-planning committee to develop the first draft of the entire portfolio including the rubrics and expectations regarding levels of performance.

Decisions about setting performance expectations should always attempt to balance the dual purpose of evaluation and professional growth. Our experience suggests that a system that emphasizes excellence over improvement will encourage administrators to highlight strengths and minimize weaknesses, reducing the focus on growth. Conversely, a system that prioritizes growth may inadvertently leave too much room for poor performance. A balance between the two is necessary if administrators are to be held to high standards while continually improving their practice in significant ways.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLANS

After a district identifies standards, descriptions of practice, and rubrics that clearly define performance, it should verify that these standards align with system and school strategic plans. In the case of APEP, one of our strategic plan initiatives was to improve community engagement. As such, we needed to add specific items to our descriptions of practice and rubrics for communication beyond those included in the ISLLC framework. Other standards required little adaptation to match the goals set forth in our strategic plan.

At the school level, we ensured that the standards and descriptions of practice matched the goals set forth in school improvement plans. As with most school systems, the plans included specific school-based objectives, such as implementing a standards-based curriculum, assessing student learning, demonstrating accountability, and closing achievement gaps. Successful implementation of the school improvement plan requires high-quality administrative leadership.

Districts should align the requirements for the school-based improvement plan and the district's strategic plan to the standards that comprise the framework of the evaluation system (discussed above). This ensures that the portfolio-evaluation system not only supports personal administrator self-reflection but that this growth is reflected in organizational priorities. As will be discussed in a later section, data from the school-based improvement plan will be used to promote professional growth and assess administrator performance as part of the summative evaluation that considers portfolio entries, student growth data, and observations of practice.

PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS

Districts need to develop procedures and instruments for all components of the formal evaluation process. To do so, it is essential to have at the start of this process some design principles related to portfolio construction. In our work with APEP, we began with a handful of nonnegotiable design principles:

- APEP is not viewed as a “show me everything you have accomplished” portfolio.
- APEP is used to demonstrate both growth and achievement (or excellence).
- Depth of reflection is sought over breadth of presentation.
- Attention to the selection of artifacts that are rich and multifaceted is paramount. Fewer artifacts with a rich reflection accompanying them are preferred to a handbook of artifacts with little to no reflective content included.

Districts should translate the principles they identify into simple instructions and instruments for administrators to use as they construct their portfolio and its individual entries:

School Administrator Self-Assessment Worksheet. Before beginning to create their portfolio, administrators should complete a self-assessment, where they rate their performance on the standards and key elements (discussed above) and cite evidence from past practice. The administrator and evaluator will use the results from the self-assessment to determine which of the standards will form the focus of the portfolio.

Directions for Portfolio Preparation. Districts need to make procedural decisions about whether the portfolio development process will be comprehensive or focused and then share the reasoning behind their decision with administrators. In the case of APEP, we opted for limiting the required number of standards to be addressed in a given year, consistent with our design principles described above. For example, our directions for portfolio entries read as follows:

The actual number of standards to be used as the basis of any evaluation will not exceed four (4). A maximum of five (5) artifacts (in total) will be used for the entire portfolio construction. One (1) of these artifacts must be a growth artifact and the remaining are to be achievement artifacts. The growth artifact should be chosen to document growth from a point of struggle, weakness, or failure in achieving a goal, completing a task or otherwise demonstrating mastery of a standard. Reflection on the growth artifact should be at least partly focused on the learning that has resulted from the struggle. The achievement artifacts are designed to demonstrate success in attaining proficiency or better in part or all of an individual standard. Part of the reflection on the achievement artifacts (and the growth artifact, if relevant) should be on how the artifact reflects growth on the selected standard. Also, reflection about how the artifact reflects growth on other standards that are related to the selected standards is also appropriate.

Note that all four design principles are evident in these directions—administrators collect a small thoughtful sample of work, which demonstrates both growth and achievement, encourages integration across standards, and requires significant reflection on the part of the administrator.

After specifying how many standards will be addressed and what type of artifacts should be included, directions must convey the value of paying more attention to the quality of reflection and extension of learning rather than to the quantity of artifacts. We recommend that administrators use the "Natural Harvest" approach for choosing artifacts.¹¹ This methodology stresses the value of capturing many aspects of one's work through the inclusion of and reflection upon a few artifacts. The directions also reference Brown and Irby's *The Principal Portfolio*, which recommends three stages of construction for each portfolio entry:¹²

Stage 1. Selecting relevant, carefully chosen documents or other artifacts that reflect attainment of or progress toward established criteria (in this case, one or more of the standards)

Stage 2. Writing a reflection that describes, analyzes, and assesses the leadership experiences illustrated by the artifacts

Stage 3. Preparing an action plan for future work based on assessment and analysis

In addition to the self-assessment and directions, reflective prompts should be created to ensure that all administrators and their evaluators have common expectations for what information is included in each reflection. In APEP, we used the reflection questions shown in figure 5.2.

Finally, forms must be created to guide the evaluator's review and assessment of the information in the portfolio entries. All instruments must be clear, concise, and designed to promote reflection.

Artifacts

The selection of artifacts included in the portfolio is dependent upon which aspects of practice administrators are trying to illustrate. For example, imagine that an administrator had decided to focus on improving communication with families as a growth goal. Any of the following artifacts would be suitable:

- A comparison of two samples of written communication to families highlighting changes between the two that illustrate improved practice
- A chain of linked information such as a PowerPoint presentation delivered to a PTSA meeting regarding student achievement, the feedback received from that presentation, and the subsequent PowerPoint presentation and feedback—all of which highlight changes the administrator made in response to

FIGURE 5.2
Sample excerpts for reflection for administrators

(1) **Describe the documents found in this section.**

- Who was involved? What were the circumstances, concerns, issues?
- Where and when did the event or series of events occur?

(2) **Analyze and appraise the action represented in the documentation.**

- How were the activities related to the district strategic plan and/or school-based school improvement plan?
- Did the action(s) taken result in the intended outcomes?
- What impact did decisions or actions have on students, teachers, and/or community?
- How do the events or activities relate to leadership expectations?

(3) **Describe the next steps and future direction to be taken based on the analysis.**

- What effect did this have on the accomplishment of the strategic plan?
- How will the administrator build upon this action for future growth and improve practice?
- What plan for improving student learning can be developed from this data?

Source: Genevieve Brown and Beverly J. Irby. *The Principal Portfolio* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 1997).

- Excerpts from an administrator's journal documenting Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings that describe successes and mistakes and include next steps
- Analysis of a plan for improved communication with a family with whom the administrator has had difficult interactions

The administrator's decision regarding which of these artifacts to select may also address other goals. In our case, the community was very concerned with the IEP process, so an administrator selecting this artifact would also be able to address this systemic goal. We also had a strong focus on using and explaining student achievement data to broad audiences, and the PowerPoint presentation to PTSA may serve that end as well.

Again, districts should reiterate to administrators that the goal in selecting artifacts and reflecting on their meaning is to provide an opportunity for in-depth assessment of the administrator's performance in a focused area. With APEP, our emphasis was to ensure that the majority of the effort administrators made on the evaluation portfolio was spent in reflection on a few artifacts rather than in superficial reflection on many.

Timeline and Personnel

Assuming the parameters have been established and the appropriate instruments created, districts should next develop a timeline for the cycle of administrator evaluation. It is imperative that this timeline be aligned with any local contractual deadlines that may impact employee status or renewal. The following recommended timeline and process is based on the APEP experience:

- *Summer leadership retreat.* District leadership should introduce and review the evaluation procedures with administrators.
- *Self-assessment completion.* Administrators should complete the self-assessment following the retreat, ideally by the third week of school.
- *Initial conference.* A conference should be held between the administrator and his or her designated evaluator to achieve two outcomes: select overall goals for the upcoming year and identify (at least provisionally) the standards that will be the focus of the administrator's portfolio and evaluation for that year.
- *Reflection period and final agreement.* Following this conference (two weeks later), the administrator and evaluator should communicate briefly to confirm and potentially adjust the selected standards. This extended period allows time for additional reflection.
- *Collection of evidence and formal conferences to chart progress.* For the remainder of the academic year, administrators and evaluators should set up a minimum of two additional formal conferences to chart progress during the evaluation cycle. This can also be accomplished through learning communities, discussed below.
- *Summative evaluation.* At the close of the year, the final portfolio and revised self-assessment should be submitted and reviewed with the evaluator. As discussed above, districts need to set guidelines around weighting the different pieces of evidence—including the portfolio, student achievement, and observational data—to determine the overall category of performance. If performance meets acceptable levels, the conference provides an opportunity for evaluators to assist administrators in setting goals for the next academic year and generating plans for achieving them over the summer months.
- *Remediation.* Depending on the parameters set by the district, if performance falls below acceptable standards, one of two options may be pursued. In the most severe cases, the administrator should be terminated or reassigned. In cases where administrators are not reassigned or terminated, evaluators must work with them to develop a comprehensive improvement plan to address the areas of weakness. This plan should include specific action steps, professional development, and follow-up to ensure that improvement is made during the next school year.

In most school systems, administrators and their evaluators are in a complex relationship. The evaluators are usually part of a central (or regional) office that is charged with providing information, direction, and support to those they also evaluate. As a result, it is recommended that additional support for the portfolio development process come through professional development in a learning community described next.

DESIGNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATING PEER LEARNING COMMUNITIES

An administrator-evaluation system, like a teacher-evaluation system, must serve two purposes—quality assurance and professional learning (see chapter 4). Although the portfolio is used as evidence in the summative evaluation process for administrators, one of its overarching goals is to encourage professional growth. It accomplishes this through an iterative process of self-assessment, focused artifact collection, reflective writings, and shared reflection with a small number of colleagues.

Districts should provide opportunities for sharing and receiving feedback through the creation of a professional learning community of administrators within the district. One way of accomplishing this outcome is to devote professional development time to this task within regularly scheduled administrator meetings and to create a monthly professional development calendar that emphasizes instructional leadership.

To build a principal's skill in artifact selection, districts should utilize these meetings to employ a process called consultancy, which is designed to improve either a product or practice.¹³ A brief review of the modified consultancy protocol is described in table 5.2. This process is accomplished in self-selected triads of administrators, which gather for ninety minutes of uninterrupted time. Before the meeting, each administrator has selected one entry from his or her working portfolio to share with the group, including the artifact, description, reflections, and key questions. (Note: copies of this work are distributed ahead of time.) To build ownership, groups must self-govern their process.

In our experience, this protocol became invaluable to individuals as they prepared their portfolio for evaluation. Consultancy, at its best, helped the presenter think differently about the work, exposed ideas not previously considered, and revealed gaps in the presenter's thinking. Administrators also developed new reflective listening skills and built trust among colleagues. Instead of focusing on problems, conversations examined work that would result in improved teaching and learning in schools. We found that the process of reflecting on artifacts and then sharing them with peers required explicit modeling, sufficient time for sharing, and trust within the community of leaders.

TABLE 5.2
Consultancy protocol

Time	Activity	Description
3–5 minutes	Presentation of materials and posing of the central question.	Presenter provides short, concise information relevant to the entry and the question they will pose to the group.
2 minutes	Clarifying questions are asked to the presenter.	These questions address short factual issues needed for the group to move forward. <i>Example questions include:</i> Was this the first time you did...? How many people were involved...?
3–5 minutes	Probing questions are asked to the presenter.	These questions dig into the substance of the presentation and expose ideas that may not previously have been considered. These questions need not be answered, but instead are designed to push the presenter's thinking on the issue. <i>Examples question stems include:</i> Did you consider...? How did you come to this way of thinking...?
10 minutes	Consultancy takes place while presenter is silent and taking notes.	During this time, the presenter silently takes notes, while the remainder of the group has a conversation about the issue at hand. This structure forces presenters to reflect on what they are hearing, as opposed to becoming defensive.
5 minutes	Presenter reflects while group is silent.	The presenter synthesizes the group's discussion and shares any immediate next steps.
3 minutes	Group debriefs the process.	Together, the group debriefs how the process works and how it can be adjusted for future presenters.

CONCLUSION

School districts that have created administrator evaluation systems similar to APEP have reported many benefits, primarily in the quality of professional conversations. Such an effort will require an initial investment of time and resources, although benefits extend far beyond the area of evaluation and infuse the entire district with an enhanced culture of professional learning. As noted above, if the evaluation procedures and instruments are developed with the aim of promoting administrator growth, such a system can support continuous self-assessment, reflection on practice, and collaborative professional conversations.

Despite the benefits, there are some challenges and considerations districts should keep in mind when implementing an administrator portfolio-evaluation system:

- Many administrators find it difficult to set aside the time required to engage deeply in reflection. Our decision to share artifacts through peer consultancy provided the necessary structure to help administrators keep up with the work over the course of the year.
- Without a commitment to professional development, a new portfolio-evaluation system is unlikely to produce any real change in practice. An effective professional development plan provides systemic and integrated training. With APEP, we also saw the consultancy as a means to differentiate professional development, as triads examined a range of professional issues and provided opportunities for administrators to gain insight into appropriate next steps.
- Districts need to be prepared for the inherent, unintended consequences of the evaluation's design and implementation. For example, if the system allows for two growth standards and two achievement standards, do administrators or the community hear that as an acceptance of mediocrity? Or, if all standards must show excellence, is it then unsafe to explore areas for growth? Communication and clarity about system objectives can help ameliorate this potential problem.
- Portfolio construction can mean many things to many people. With APEP, the program was strengthened when we had samples of portfolio entries and reflections that guided the work of others.
- It is critical to integrate all components of an administrator's evaluation. As APEP was evolving, we saw that the program was more beneficial as the links between student achievement, professional practice, and external evaluation were clear, explicit, and aligned.

As school districts move to implement programs similar to APEP, they will certainly face their own unique challenges. We recommend that districts use the guidelines discussed in this chapter and the learning communities they establish to address concerns as they arise.